

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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1]

TO JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.  
THE INFLEXIBLE ENEMY OF TYRANNY.  
ON THE  
*Peace between England and America.*

Botley, January 1, 1815.

DEAR SIR,—When you, a few minutes after I was enclosed amongst felons in Newgate, for having written about the flogging of English Local Militia-men in the presence of German Dragoons, at the town of Ely, came to take me by the hand, and, looking round you, exclaimed, "Well! I am seventy years old, but I shall yet see .....;" when you uttered that exclamation, little indeed did I hope that your prediction would so soon seem to be in a fair way of being fulfilled. The peace with America is certainly the most auspicious event that I have ever had to record, or to notice, since the first day that I ventured to put my thoughts upon paper. It opens to mankind a prospect of happier days. It has, by a stroke of the pen, blasted the malignant hopes of the enemies of freedom, baffled all their speculations, flung them back beyond the point whence they started in their career of hostility against the principles of political and civil liberty; hurled them and their paragraphs, and pamphlets and reviews, and all the rest of their hireling productions, down into the dirt to be trampled under foot; changed their exultation into mourning, their audacity into fear. Let those to whom liberty and slavery are indifferent talk about boundary lines, passages, fishing banks and commercial arrangements; you will look at the peace with very different eyes; you will see in it the greatest stroke that has ever yet been struck in favour of that cause, to which you have devoted your life; and struck, too, at a time, when almost every friend of freedom, except yourself, seemed to have yielded to feelings of despair.

But, in order to be able fully and justly to estimate the consequences of this peace, we must take a review, 1st, of the cause of the war; 2d, of the causes of its conti-

[2

nuance until now; and, 3d, of the causes which produced the peace. When we have done this, the consequences of such a termination of the war will naturally develop themselves to our view. Happily this war has closed before its causes and its objects have been forgotten. We are yet within the recollection of every circumstance; and though I have, over and over again, stated them all, it is now necessary to recapitulate the material points, and to give them, if possible, a form and situation that may defy the power of time. All sorts of vile means will be used by those who have the controul of a corrupt press, to misrepresent, to disfigure, to disguise, to suppress, upon this important occasion. The hirelings are raving with mortification at this grand event, the consequences of which they feel before hand. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to place the whole of the matter in a clear light, and thus to do all that we are able to counteract their efforts.

FIRST, as to the cause of the war: though there had been several points in dispute, the war was produced by the impressment, by our naval officers, of men out of American ships on the high seas. The Republic wished to take no part in the European war, especially after Napoleon made himself a King. But she, at last, found, that, in order to avoid miseries equal to those of war, it was necessary for her to arm and to fight. We stopped her ships on the high seas, and our naval officers impressed such men as they thought proper, took them on board of our ships, compelled them to submit to our discipline, and to fight, in short, in our service. The ground on which we proceeded to do this was, that the persons impressed were British subjects; and that we had a right to impress British subjects, being seamen, find them where we might. The Republic denied altogether our right to take persons of any description by force out of her neutral ships, unless they were soldiers or seamen actually in the service of our enemy. But, perhaps, if we had confined our impressments to our own people, she might not



have gone to war. This, however, our naval officers did not do. It has never been denied by our Government, that many *native Republicans* were impressed by our officers. It is notorious, that many of them have been compelled to serve on board of our ships; and, of course, that many have been wounded or killed; or, at least, carried from their country, their homes, their family, and their affairs. Mr. Madison, in his last speech to the Congress, states, that "*thousands*" of Native Republicans were thus impressed, before war was declared by the Congress. The Congress, at last, declared war; but the President, always anxious to avoid the calamities of war, immediately proposed the renewal of negotiations for peace. Mr. Russell, then the Republican Minister in London, signified to Lord Castlereagh, in August 1812, that he was authorised to stipulate for an *Armistice*, to begin in sixty days, on the following conditions: "That the Orders in Council be repealed, and no illegal blockades be substituted for them; and that orders be immediately given to *discontinue the impressment of persons from American vessels, and to restore the citizens of the United States already impressed*; it being moreover well understood, that the British Government will assent to enter into definitive arrangements, as soon as may be, on these and every other difference, by a Treaty, to be concluded, either at London or Washington, as on an impartial consideration of existing circumstances shall be deemed most expedient.—As an inducement to Great Britain to discontinue the practice of impressment from American vessels, I am authorised to give assurance that a law shall be passed (to be reciprocal), to prohibit the employment of British seamen in the public or commercial service of the United States.—It is sincerely believed, that such an arrangement would prove more efficacious, in securing to Great Britain her seamen, than the practice of impressment, so derogatory to the sovereign attributes of the United States, and so incompatible with the *personal rights of their citizens*."

Lord Castlereagh's answer to this was as follows:—"From this statement you will perceive, that the view you have taken of this part of the subject is incorrect; and that, in the present state of the relations between the two countries, the operation of the Order of the 23d of

June can only be defeated by a refusal on the part of your Government to desist from hostilities, or to comply with the conditions expressed in the said Order. Under the circumstances of your having no powers to negotiate, I must decline entering into a detailed discussion of the propositions which you have been directed to bring forward.—I cannot, however, refrain on one single point from expressing my surprise; namely, that, as a condition, preliminary even to a suspension of hostilities, the Government of the United States should have thought fit to demand, that the British Government should desist from its ancient and accustomed practice of impressing British seamen from the merchant ships of a foreign State, simply on the assurance that a law shall hereafter be passed, to prohibit the employment of British seamen in the public or commercial service of that State.—The British Government now, as heretofore, is ready to receive from the Government of the United States, and amicably to discuss, any proposition which professes to have in view either to check abuse in exercise of the practice of impressment, or to accomplish, by means less liable to vexation, the object for which impressment has hitherto been found necessary; but they cannot consent to suspend the exercise of a right upon which the naval strength of the empire mainly depends, until they are fully convinced that means can be devised, and will be adopted, by which the object to be obtained by the exercise of that right can be effectually secured. I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient humble Servant."

This offer, you will perceive, came from the President. How false, then, is the charge, that he went to war to assist Napoleon! If that had been true, he, of course, would have proposed no *armistice*. He would have been anxious to avoid all means of reconciliation. But, on the contrary, he is the first to make an effort to put an end to the war; and, even in the case of impressment, to tender voluntarily a measure calculated to remove our apprehensions on the score of our seamen. I do not know how an English Secretary of State may have been able to look a Republican Minister in the face, while the former was asserting, that the strength of England mainly depended on the exercise of the right of impressing its own subjects;

but, be that as it may, the President here *tendered a measure* to render that impressment unnecessary, unless it was still meant to impress *the Republicans*.

The Republic having failed in this endeavour to restore peace, she made another attempt, the succeeding month, as will be seen in the letter of Mr. Monroe to Sir John B. Warren, and which letter it is of great importance now to peruse with attention. After the opening of his letter, he proceeds thus:—"I am instructed to inform you, that it will be very satisfactory to the President to meet the British Government in such arrangements as may terminate, without delay, the hostilities which now exist between the United States and Great Britain, on conditions honourable to both nations.—At the moment of the declaration of war, the President gave a signal proof of the attachment of the United States to peace. Instructions were given, at an early period, to the late Charge d'Affaires of the United States at London, to propose to the British Government an armistice, on conditions which, it was presumed, would have been satisfactory. It has been seen with regret, that the proposition made by Mr. Monroe, *particularly in regard to the important interest of impressment*, was rejected; and that none was offered through that channel, as a basis on which hostilities might cease.—As your Government has authorised you to propose a cessation of hostilities, and is doubtless aware of the important and salutary effect which a satisfactory *adjustment of this difference* cannot fail to have on the future relations between the two countries, I indulge the hope that it has, ere this, given you full powers for the purpose. Experience has sufficiently evinced that no peace can be durable, unless *this object* is provided for: it is presumed, therefore, that it is equally the interest of both countries to adjust it at this time.—Without further discussing questions of *right*, the President is desirous to provide a remedy for the evils complained of on both sides. The claim of the British Government is *to take from the merchant vessels of other countries British subjects*. In the practice, the Commanders of British ships of war often take from the merchant vessels of the United States *American citizens*. If the United States prohibit the employment of

*British subjects* in their service, and enforce the prohibition by *suitable regulations and penalties*, the motive for the practice is taken away. It is in *this mode* that the President is willing to accommodate this important controversy with the British Government, and it cannot be conceived on what ground the arrangement can be refused.—A suspension of the practice of impressment, pending the armistice, seems to be a necessary consequence. It cannot be presumed, while the parties are engaged in a negotiation to adjust amicably this important difference, that the United States would *admit the right, or acquiesce in the practice*, of the opposite party; or that Great Britain would be unwilling to restrain her cruisers from a practice which would have the strongest tendency to *defeat the negotiation*. It is presumable that both parties would enter into a negotiation with a sincere desire to give it effect. For this purpose, it is necessary that a clear and distinct understanding be first obtained between them, of the accommodation which each is prepared to make. If the British Government is willing to suspend the practice of impressment from American vessels, on consideration that the United States will *exclude British seamen* from their service, the regulation, by which this compromise should be carried into effect, would be solely the object of this negotiation. The armistice would be of short duration. If the parties agree, peace would be the result. If the negotiation failed, each would be restored to its former state, and to all its pretensions, by recurring to war.—Lord Castlereagh, in his note to Mr. Russell, seems to have supposed, that, had the British Government accepted the propositions made to it, Great Britain would have suspended immediately the exercise of a right *on the mere assurance of this Government*, that a law would be *afterwards passed* to prohibit the employment of British seamen in the service of the United States, and that Great Britain would have no agency in the regulation to give effect to that proposition. Such an idea was not in the contemplation of this Government, nor is to be reasonably inferred from Mr. Russell's note: least, however, by possibility, such an inference might be drawn from the instructions to Mr. Russell, and anxious that there should be no misunderstanding in the



“case, subsequent instructions were given  
 “to Mr. Russell, with a view to obviate  
 “every objection of the kind alluded to.  
 “As they bear date on the 27th of July,  
 “and were forwarded by the British  
 “packet *Alpheia*, it is more than probable  
 “that they may have been received and  
 “acted on.—I am happy to explain to  
 “you thus fully the views of my Govern-  
 “ment on this important subject. The  
 “President desires that the war which  
 “exists between our countries should be  
 “terminated on such conditions as may se-  
 “cure a solid and durable peace. To ac-  
 “complish this great object, it is neces-  
 “sary that the *interest of impressment* be  
 “satisfactorily arranged. He is willing  
 “that Great Britain should be *secured*  
 “*against the evils of which she complains.*  
 “He seeks, on the other hand, that the  
 “citizens of the United States should be  
 “protected against a practice, which,  
 “while it *degrades the nation*, deprives  
 “them of *their right as freemen*, takes  
 “them *by force from their families and*  
 “*their country*, into a *foreign service*, to  
 “*fight the battles of a foreign Power*, per-  
 “haps *against their own kindred and*  
 “*country.*—I abstain from entering, in  
 “this communication, into other grounds  
 “of differences. The Orders in Council  
 “having been repealed (with a reservation  
 “not impairing a corresponding right on  
 “the part of the United States), and no  
 “illegal blockades revived or instituted in  
 “their stead, and an understanding being  
 “obtained on the subject of impressment,  
 “in the mode herein proposed, the Presi-  
 “dent is willing to agree to a cessation  
 “of hostilities, with a view to arrange, by  
 “treaty, in a more distinct and ample  
 “manner, and to the satisfaction of both  
 “parties, *every other subject of contro-*  
 “*versy.*—I will only add, that if there  
 “be no objection to an accommodation of  
 “the difference relating to impressment,  
 “in the mode proposed, other than the sus-  
 “pension of the British claims to impress-  
 “ment during the armistice, there can be  
 “none *to proceeding*, without the armistice,  
 “*to an immediate discussion and arrange-*  
 “*ment of an article on that subject.* This  
 “great question being satisfactorily ad-  
 “justed, the way will be open either for  
 “an armistice, or any other course leading  
 “most conveniently and *expeditiously to a*  
 “*general pacification.*”

This offer, too, was rejected! What  
 more was the President to do unless he, at

once allowed, that we had a right to im-  
 press on board American ships. Was this  
 offer to be attributed to a wish to aid Na-  
 poleon? How execrable, then, has been  
 the conduct of those who have been labour-  
 ing to make the people of England believe,  
 that Mr. Madison went to war to aid Na-  
 poleon! What wretches must those be,  
 who have called him “the tool of the fallen  
 “despot?” what impudent men, those who  
 have accused him of attacking us *in the*  
*dark*, like an assassin? The man, who,  
 the other day, uttered that expression,  
 ought to have had his lips smashed upon  
 his teeth. Every effort, short of opening  
 the Republican ships to English press-  
 gangs, was, it appears to me, made by the  
 President to prevent the war, and to put  
 an end to the war after it was begun.

It is asserted most roundly, in Lord  
 Castlereagh’s letter to Mr. Russell, that  
 “to impress British seamen from the mer-  
 “chant ships of a foreign State is the *anci-*  
 “*ent and accustomed practice of the British*  
 “*Government.*” It has often been thus  
 said, but never has been attempted to be  
 proved. I have never read of any such  
 practice; I have never heard of any such  
 practice; and, I defy any one, to cite in  
 any book on the law of nations any record  
 of such a practice, or any maxim or prin-  
 ciple to warrant it. I have thrown down  
 this challenge fifty times, and it has never  
 been taken up. But, we did not stop with  
 this practice. We impressed *Native Re-*  
*publicans*. Mr. Madison says that we im-  
 pressed *thousands* of them. The President  
 tenders us a law, to be *agreed on* by us as  
 well as him, to prevent our seamen from  
 serving on board of the Republican ships;  
 and this, *even this*, does not satisfy us.—  
 He wishes to put an end to the war in this  
 way, even at a time when he is accused of  
 having declared it for the purpose of aiding  
 Napoleon; and still the hirelings of the  
 London press call him “the tool of Napo-  
 “leon;” while other miscreants accuse him  
 of having attacked us in the dark, like an  
 assassin.

SECOND, *the causes of the continuance of*  
*the War.*—But, how came the war not  
 to cease when the war in Europe ceased?  
 This is the most interesting part of the  
 subject. The professed object of the war,  
 on our part, was to make the Americans  
 submit to our practice of impressment, al-  
 ledging that that practice was necessary to  
 the preservation of our maritime power,  
 on which our existence depended. Mr.



Madison tendered us the means of preventing our seamen from avoiding our service by serving on board of American ships; but, laying that aside, why did we not make peace as soon as we had made peace with France? We were no longer in danger. There existed no longer any reason to fear, that our men would take refuge on board of American ships. The European peace had taken away all ground of quarrel. The Republic was always ready to treat. Her Ministers, or Commissioners, were in London soliciting audiences. And yet the war continued, and, on our part, with more fury than ever. All danger to us was at an end. The French king was restored; the Pope was re-established in his Chair of St. Peter; regular Government and the Inquisition were happily restored in Spain; and, in short, "social order and our holy religion," as John Bowles used to call them, were every where become again in vogue.

This change took place in the months of April and May last; and just as I was hugging myself in the prospect of a speedy peace with America, out came a very extraordinary paper from the Admiralty. It was an address to the fleets. It set out with expressing thanks to the sailors for their services in the glorious cause, which had just been crowned with such signal success; it then stated to them, that their services would be wanted a little longer, in order to carry on the war against America, which had been guilty of an unprovoked act of aggression against our maritime rights; and it concluded by observing, that, with the aid of the navy, there was no doubt but such a peace would be procured as would tend to the "LASTING TRANQUILLITY OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD." There was a great deal of meaning in these concluding words. Suppose the war to have gained us an acknowledgment of our right to send press-gangs into American merchant ships on the high seas, what had that to do with "the lasting tranquillity of the civilized world?" And why the word *civilized*? In short, this novel instrument was, in America, looked upon as a new declaration of war against them; a declaration of war upon a new ground. Jonathan, who heard so much about our care for the "civilized world," when we began our war against the French Republic, did not fail to interpret these significant words according to John Bowles's Dictionary. Accordingly we find Mr.

Monroe, in his instructions to the Commissioners at Ghent, written in July and August, telling them, that it appears to the President, that the war, on our part, has a new object.

But this proclamation of the Admiralty was not all that had a tendency to produce this opinion of our object. On the 2<sup>d</sup> of June, just after the issuing of this proclamation, the London newspapers published what they called a speech of Sir Joseph Yorke, one of the *Lords of the Admiralty*, delivered, as it was stated, in the House of Commons, the evening before. This document is of infinite importance, whether we view it as coming from a Gentleman *in office*, or as to the time of its having been uttered, or, at least, published. It was in these memorable words, as published in the *Courier* newspaper of the 2<sup>d</sup> June, 1814.—"Sir J. Yorke observed, that although "one great enemy of this country, Bonaparte, had been *deposed*, there was another gentleman whose DEPOSITION was also necessary to our interest, he meant Mr. President Madison, and with a view to THAT DEPOSITION a considerable naval force must be kept up, especially in the Atlantic. But as to his Hon. Friend's opinion respecting the reduction of the Navy, he wished it to be considered that a number of shipping were employed in conveying French prisoners to France, and bringing home our own countrymen. So much for the occupation of our navy on the home station.—But from the Mediterranean for instance, several three deckers were ordered home, and he could swear that no practicable exertion would be remitted to reduce the expence of our Naval Department."—This required no interpreter. It left no room for miscomprehension. It went, at once, to the point; and, though it might possibly have been a fabrication of the Newspaper Editors, it never was, at any time afterwards, stated to have been such; and yet it was of quite importance enough to merit a contradiction, if it could have received it. No wonder, then, that Mr. Madison thought, that we had found out a new object for the war. It was high time for him to make this discovery, when he read in the English newspapers a report of the speech of a Lord of the Admiralty, stating, in an official way, that a strong naval force was still necessary with a view to THE DEPOSING of Mr. Madison. This speech, as I have often said, may

have been a fabrication; but the publication of it never was complained of in the House; the report was never contradicted in the newspapers; and, at any rate, when coupled with the Proclamation of the Admiralty, Mr. Madison could not help looking upon it as very nearly proof positive of our Government's determination to *depose* him; that is to say, to destroy the Constitution of the Republic.

Besides, these documents went to America accompanied with the menacing language of our press; or, at least, all that part of the press which was most *in vogue*, which was most cherished by the rich, and which was looked upon as speaking the voice of persons having great influence. The prints of this description, *the moment Napoleon was down*, changed, all at once, their tone with regard to America. They had *before* talked of our maritime rights; they had *apologized* for the war; they had called it a war of *necessity*; they had affected to *lament* that necessity; they had been expressing their hopes of the return of *peace* with our misled *brethren in America*. But no sooner was Napoleon put down, than these same prints proclaimed the necessity of continuing the war for the purpose of *subduing* the Republic; of bringing her to *subjection*; of putting down her Government; of bringing to an union with us a part, at least, of the States; of rooting out her *democratical principles*. They declared, that no peace was to be made with *James Madison*, whom they called a TRAITOR and a REBEL. But observe well, that the main object constantly kept in view by these prints was the necessity of *delivering the world* of the EXAMPLE of the existence of a Government founded on DEMOCRATIC rebellion. To quote *all*, or a hundredth part, of the instances that I am here speaking of, would fill a large volume. I will, therefore, content myself with a few passages from the *Times* newspaper of the last two weeks of the month of April, 1814.

"It is understood that *part of our army in France will be immediately transferred to America, to FINISH the war there with the same glory as in Europe, and to place the peace on a foundation equally firm and lasting.*"—.....  
 "The American Government is, in point of fact, as much a tyranny (though we are far from saying it is so horrible a one) as was that of Bonaparte: and as we firmly urged the principle of no peace with Bonaparte; so, to be con-

sistent with ourselves, we must in like manner maintain the doctrine of NO PEACE WITH JAMES MADISON.....

"Can we doubt, that a vigorous effort on our part will annihilate the power of a faction, alike hostile to Britain, and fatal to America? Is not the time propitious for WINNING AT LEAST THE SOUNDER AND BETTER PART OF THE AMERICANS TO AN UNION OF INTERESTS WITH THE COUNTRY FROM WHENCE THEY SPRUNG?".....

.....Again, in the same paper of a date a few months later:—"The ill-organized association, is on the eve of dissolution;" and the world is speedily to be delivered of the mischievous example of the existence of a Government FOUNDED ON DEMOCRATIC REBELLION."

I need insert no more. This was the language of the *favoured and patronised* part of the English press. It is impossible to efface these passages. They speak in language which can neither be misunderstood nor misrepresented.

In addition to these clear unequivocal indications, we must not omit to bear in mind the article, which appeared in all our London prints, some weeks after the peace of Paris, stating, that there was a *secret article* in that treaty, pledging the Continental Powers *not to interfere in the war, or the dispute, between England and America*. This was something very remarkable; for the article was given as an extract from the *Vienna Gazette*. How could it get into that Gazette, which, all the world knows, contains nothing disapproved of by the Government? How could the article get there? It related to a matter of very great importance. Uncommonly important it was. The editor, the mere editor of a Paper at Vienna was not likely to think much, or care much, about America, or her dispute. *Why* should he *invent* the story of such a secret article? Be the cause of this article what it might, the effect certainly was very great. The fact, which was taken for granted by the enemies of liberty here, encouraged them to proceed in urging the continuance of the war; they told the people, that there was *no danger* now; that all the Powers of Europe were of one mind; that there was no fear, in the present state of France, of her lending the Americans any assistance;



that all the *maritime* powers were exhausted by the war; that they stood in need of long repose to recover themselves; that, in fact, their fleet and seamen were nearly all gone; that *now! now! NOW OR NEVER!* was the motto; that, by a good hearty exertion, this Republic, this *dangerous example* to the world, might be for ever got rid of. There were many amongst these publishers and their patrons, who hoped for, who expected, and who encouraged the notion of, a *re-colonization* of the Republican States. They openly proclaimed this; and, indeed, I verily believe, that, about four months ago, a great part of the nation had been persuaded, that the project would be accomplished very speedily. Thus was the war rendered popular; and so popular, that, even in the city of London, and at a Common Hall, a motion for a petition against the continuance of the American war, though coupled with a call for the discontinuance of the Income Tax, which that war rendered indispensable, could not obtain a moment's hearing. The people were worked up to a senseless spirit of resentment, while those who had so worked them up, had in view the utter subversion of the American Republic, and with her, the last remains of political liberty.

Here, then, we have the *real objects* of the friends of tyranny; the sons and daughters of corruption; the race who never can be at heart's ease while the sun shines upon one free country; upon one nation happy in the enjoyment of liberty. These people had seen liberty, and the very hope of liberty, destroyed in France; their long existing hopes of seeing that object accomplished had been just fully gratified; but they, who are as cunning as they are wicked, clearly saw that nothing, and, perhaps, worse than nothing, was done, unless the free Constitution of the American Republic could be destroyed. The sons and daughters of corruption foresaw, that, while this Republic existed, nothing was done; that the "*example*," to use the words of the *Times*, "*of the existence of such a Government*," would keep Bribery and Corruption in constant dread and constant danger; that the example of a people living under a Government such as that of America, without tumults, without commotions, would always be a handle for the friends of *reform* to lay hold of; and, therefore, they anxiously wished for the overthrow of that Government; therefore they wished

to see Mr. Madison deposed; therefore they wished to see an aristocratical faction raised up against the Republican Government; they thought, that *war*, necessarily producing taxes heavier than the Republicans had ever been used to, would furnish the aristocratical faction with a plausible ground of complaint; they were in hopes of thus producing, first, violent opposition to the war; next, something like open **REBELLION**; next, a *division of the States*; and, last, the conquest or *overthrow of the whole*. This was the main ground of hope with these malignant publishers; these enemies of real freedom; these sons and daughters of Bribery and Corruption, whose hearts overflowed with gall, whose eye-balls were seared by the sight of a people, who chose their representatives every twenty-four months, in the choosing of whom *every man paying taxes had a voice*, whose chief magistrate even was chosen from amongst his fellow-citizens every four years, without any pecuniary or religious qualification; and whose whole Government, civil, judicial, military, and naval, did not cost above a tenth part as much as the amount of the Civil List alone in England, though the population of the country was nearly equal to that of England. This was an object that blasted their sight. They could not endure it. They were mad at the thought of its being left in existence. They saw that, while this spectacle was in the world, they were never safe. It was useless, in their view of the matter, to have restored the Bourbons, the Pope, the Dominicans, and the Inquisition, while America remained an example and an asylum for the oppressed of all nations.

Hence these malignant writers left nothing undone to urge the nation on to a *continuation of the war*. Every art was made use of to encourage an acquiescence in the project. Mr. Madison was held up as the basest of men; as a traitor, who, at a moment when England was in great danger from the designs and the power of Napoleon, took advantage of our embarrassment, and declared war with a design to assist him in totally ruining us. But the great inducement, the great ground of hope of final success was, the expected *division of the States*. It was well known that there was an aristocratical faction in the four States, called the *New England*, or *Eastern States*; that some very artful men, in that part of the Union, had stirred up a sort of rebellion. The influence of

these men was magnified; and a belief was created, that a division would take place. This hope, however, has failed; and you will have the pleasure to see, in a short time, this faction plunged into irretrievable disgrace and ruin.

Having now endeavoured to place in a clear light, the *cause of the war*, and the *causes of its continuance after the European peace*, I shall, in another letter, state the *causes of the peace*, and its probable important consequences.

In the meanwhile I remain, with the greatest respect, and most sincere attachment, your faithful and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

### MRS. SPENCER PERCEVAL.

Ye lovers of *cant*! Ye hypocrites, religious, moral, and political! Draw near and regale yourselves with a treat. Here is one who surpasses you all. The following paragraph from the *Courier* of the 4th instant, on the subject of this lady's reported intended marriage, will make every man of sense and sincerity laugh. It is clearly discernable, that the canting fellow believes the report to be true, and that his object is to frighten the lady with the condemnation of public opinion. Ladies, in such cases, are not so easily frightened, let me tell him; and they would be fools if they were. "The country has voted a large pension." He means the *Members of Parliament*. But what then? Was it made a condition, that she should not fall in love with a "*handsome Major*?" Away, you paltry, snivelling hypocrite, *whoever you may be*; and, perhaps, you may be a rival of the lady. Things much more unlikely have been; tricks more strange have been played off through the press of London, which has frequently been made the tool in the hands of those who wished to break off, or to make up matches.—Well, Madam, (for, I am sure, you are no *man*) suppose the lady is twelve years older than the Major, could you not have left *him* to find that out? And suppose she has twelve children, did not the Major know that, think you? No; no; you'll never persuade the lady, that her *reputation* will suffer from marrying a handsome young man. The public will pay her pension as cheerfully when she is Mrs. CARR, as if she had remained Mrs. PERCEVAL; and, for my own part, I shall

pay my part of it with a great deal less dissatisfaction.—The following is the article:—"The reports of the intended marriage of Mrs. Perceval are, *we believe, quite unfounded*. They have arisen from her intercourse with a neighbour's family, that of the Rev. Mr. Carr, the Clergyman of Ealing, where Mrs. Perceval lives. Mr. Carr has some *charming daughters*, and to them Mrs. Perceval has within the last two months *shewn particular attention*, visiting, and having them at home with her frequently. The Rev. Mr. Carr has two sons, one a Colonel, the other a Major in the Army. The latter, now at home, is a *remarkably handsome man*, about thirty, and he is the person whom the town tattle has destined as the bridegroom, merely because, on his sisters' account, he has shewn becoming respect, which has been becomingly received by Mrs. Perceval. But Mrs. Perceval is *twelve years older than he is*, with twelve children, the children of our late excellent Prime Minister, who fell by the hands of an assassin. Mrs. Perceval's love of her children, her reverence for the memory of an adored husband, whom she lost under circumstances so awful, would be sure safeguards for her conduct, even if it were possible to forget the exalted place she occupies in the eye of society. The heavy grief, turning her *almost to stone*, which she felt for the loss of her husband, the conspicuous part she has taken among the *most religious, moral, and amiable class*; the example her conduct has set in all respects, renders it *impossible to believe she will take a step so contrary to the course she has hitherto pursued*. The Country has done every thing kind and *honourable* to her, voting her a large pension during life, providing for her children, &c.—Among the children of her late Lord, she finds the highest consolation for his loss, and she is the last person who will *forget him so far as to throw herself into the arms of any other Gentleman, how ever deserving*."

### GERMAN TROOPS.

MR. COBBETT,—To comment upon the employment of German troops is liable, in some cases, to give offence; but a bare recital of facts, *without observations*, surely no reasonable being can object to. Impressed with this idea, I conceive I may be



permitted to state, that the people of this town did not shew any extraordinary *symptoms of joy*, on the arrival here of the *Brunswick Hussars*, who were called in by the Mayor to assist in quelling the late riot;—and several very respectable inhabitants, who had been summoned, and had attended, in aid of the civil power, *declined giving any further assistance when the foreign troops arrived*, assigning, as the reason, their *disapprobation* of the measure. I do not pretend to say, whether these persons thought or acted right or not; neither shall I undertake to decide *with whom* originated the several disputes in which the Germans were engaged whilst here; but shall conclude my narrative by stating, that some very unpleasant occurrences having taken place in the evening of Tuesday, December 13th, the Hussars *hastily* and unexpectedly took their final (but very *abrupt*) departure from the town about *midnight*! To the events of that evening is to be ascribed the circumstance alluded to in the following paragraph which appeared this day in the *Norfolk Chronicle* and *Norwich Mercury* newspapers, under the head of Lynn news:—"The private belonging to the 5th Dragoon Guards, who was seriously wounded here a short time since, in a fray with the Brunswick Hussars, we are glad to find is in a fair way of recovery."—I am, &c.

Lynn, Dec. 31st. A BY-STANDER.

#### RIOT AT LYNN.

MR. COBBETT,—In your second Letter "to the Cossack Priesthood of the State of Massachusetts," inserted in your REGISTER of Dec. 24th, you favoured them, and the world at large, with two extracts from the *Courier* newspaper, respecting the late riot in this town.—Though all *due* deference should be paid to the *Courier's* Lynn Correspondent, who evidently writes in a tone of *dignified hatred*, and with a proper *contempt* for those below him, yet certainly the great majority of the inhabitants of this populous town, do not appear to have imbibed his conception of the subject.—As some of the sailors, or, (as this writer calls them) "*poor deluded FELLOWS*," are to be tried for their lives, it should be made known, that the merchants and ship-owners have *voluntarily acceded to the terms* which these "*deluded FELLOWS*" first demanded, and the refusal to comply with which occasioned the

riot in question. And it ought to be further recorded, that the sailors confined their proceedings solely to the objects connected with their dispute; namely, the preventing mariners from proceeding to sea at the reduced wages, and the liberating their comrades who had been taken into custody; and that, in every other respect, they avoided offering the slightest insult or molestation; for when, in the struggle to effect the release of their companions, they had overcome every effort of the civil power to resist them; when they had thus become, as it were, masters of the place, they immediately retired with their rescued brethren, and the town became as peaceable as if nothing had occurred. It is but justice to make these facts public; for, though the circumstance of breaking open the prison cannot be denied, yet it is hoped the above considerations may plead, and plead strongly, in mitigation of punishment.—The writer in the *Courier* observes, "that the Mayor and other Magistrates deserve, from every peaceable and well-disposed inhabitant, the most *sincere thanks*, as their conduct was greatly to be admired."—Now, Sir, though all this *may* be true, and though I believe the mass of the inhabitants of this town to be as *peaceable* and *well-disposed* as most people, yet they seem not, at present, to have caught the enthusiasm of the *Courier's* correspondent. They feel attached to the character of the *British seaman*, with all his faults, and with all his errors, they entertain a respect for *some* political opinions of their ancestors; but the "*sincere thanks*" for the *much-to-be-admired* conduct above-mentioned, are yet to come.—Though by no means deficient in the rights of hospitality, yet no *expressions of their admiration* have hitherto burst forth at the *jovial entertainment* given by the Mayor (at his own house) to the *German Officers*, the day after their arrival.—Now, Sir, as animadverting upon certain local political occurrences, is sometimes a *ticklish point*, which no man can more *feelingly* describe than yourself; and as placards and sarcastic hand-bills are posting and flying about here in various directions, it would be friendly in you to act as a Monitor to the "*deluded*" inhabitants of this town, lest, peradventure, through any *mistaken* zeal for the constitutional notions of their ancestors, they should fall into *perilous* error, by *murmuring* when they should



offer their "*most sincere thanks*," and by censuring proceedings which are "*greatly to be admired!*"—I remain, Sir, a friend to the *real* British Constitution, and to social order, though

Lynn, Jan. 2, 1815. NO GERMAN.

#### ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

##### LETTER IV.

Nothing is more contrary to Religion than constraint."

JUSTIN MARTYR; *Lib. 5.*

SIR,—HELVETIUS remarks "That Governments are the judges of *actions*, and not of *opinions*. If FAITH (says he) be a gift of Heaven, they who have it not, deserve to be pitied; and not punished;" and adds, "it is the excess of inhumanity to persecute an unfortunate person." Every age and country furnish us with proofs, that it is possible for persons of opposite opinions to live in harmony together, and with abundant testimonies that people entertaining the greatest diversity of tenets have been alike good husbands, fathers, children, and citizens.—Governments are instituted for the preservation of social order, consequently they have a right to look to our conduct, which, if they are wise, they can sufficiently regulate by proper civil laws founded on the nature of man, his interests, and his wants. If we deport ourselves in a manner compatible with the good of society, neither legislatures nor individuals have a just pretence, authoritatively, to interfere with our opinions, let them be ever so ridiculous or absurd. As to Faith, I would say the same of it as La Rochefoucault says of Love, it is perfectly involuntary, and therefore it is no more in our power to believe or disbelieve, than it is to love or to let it alone. Why, then, persecute a person for a defect in the understanding, or a bias he cannot help?—Will any reasonable person assert that man ever chooses evil for the sake of evil? or embraces error because it is error? No! we make choice of bad through our *depraved* taste, and we receive false doctrine because we think it true. If this be admitted, ought not those who deem others wrong, and conceive themselves to be blessed with a knowledge of what is right, to have compassion for such as have the misfortune to be deluded with mistaken notions? and if their faculties should be so benumbed with prejudice that we cannot convince

them, ought we not to have a still greater tenderness for what *we consider* their lost condition, instead of despising, rejecting, and punishing them? Priests may say what they please, but *disinterested men* will never agree to their positions as to people "turning a deaf ear," being "wilfully blind," or "hardening their own hearts against the truth." It would be the grossest presumption in us to arrogate such a power over ourselves. Whatever appertains to us must be an *effect*, of which God, or the Devil by his permission, is the *cause*. And would it not be much more consistent with Christian charity, to view the different notions of our brethren in this favourable light? Those who avow sentiments contrary to popular superstitions, and thus incur that contempt and opprobrium which the bigotry of the vulgar always bestows, are by far more likely to be in earnest than they who conform to general customs and commonly received opinions; and what impartial man can doubt the *sincerity* of the Deists in their religious professions more than any other class of people?

The reason why the mass of mankind doubt whether there be such persons as *fervent* Deists, is because they are not aware of their mode of reasoning: or, if they are, they do not feel its force; and, like the Deists, cannot draw the same conclusions from the same premises that they do. Deism has had nearly as long standing in this country as the Reformation. It was first promulgated in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and is said to have been imported from Italy, perhaps from the circumstance of this country being about that time honoured by the visit of several eminent Italian philosophers, among whom we can name the celebrated Doctors *Lucilio Vanini* and *Giordano Bruno*, both of whom were ultimately led to the stake and received the crown of martyrdom; the first at Toulouse, through the good offices of an *Attorney-General*, and the last at Venice, from the hands of *Inquisitors*, for steadfastly adhering to the Doctrines they had broached.\* The first English writer upon the subject was *Lord Herbert*, of Cherbury, whose book, "*De Ventate*," was published in 1624; since which they have had among their number many of the greatest

\* See the Lives of *Bruno*, *Vanini*, *Spinoza*, *Bolin*, and *Campanella*, in *Bayle's General Dictionary*.



and best men this country has produced. —Within the last twenty years Deists have become very numerous; probably more so than is generally suspected, as many thousands of them do not openly avow their convictions on account of the prejudices excited against them by the priesthood, who, of course, cannot be much attached to persons whose opinions are opposed to their interests. But whether they make a public profession of their sentiments, or only impart them to the liberal minded, I have generally found them to have a *stricter sense* of justice, honour, and morality, than, I am sorry to say, the greater part of my fellow-Christians possess. —Whether their general good conduct arises from their consciousness that the Philistines keep a jealous eye upon them, and would take a malignant pleasure in magnifying their indiscretions; or whether it is a consequence of the morality taught by the religion of NATURE being unsophisticated by dogmas, creeds, or the mysterious wonders of faith, I will not pretend to determine; but merely, as an humble aspirer to the charity of Jesus, bear witness of the fact, and doubt not of my testimony being corroborated by every unbiassed observer of man.

Having said thus much, and having in my last given a slight sketch of the plain and simple tenets of these people, might I not ask, whether the conduct of Christian States in persecuting the Deists, does not subject them to the same reproaches which they have bestowed on those who persecuted their predecessors? To illustrate this question, I shall occasionally make a few extracts from the pious and learned Dr. Mosheim, late Chancellor of the University of Gottingen, who stands without a competitor as a writer of ecclesiastical history. When treating of the calamitous events which happened to the Church, during the first century, he has these remarkable words: \*—"The innocence and virtue that distinguished so eminently the lives of Christians, and the spotless purity of the doctrine they taught, could not defend them against the virulence and malignity of the Jews;" and again, "This odious malignity of the Jewish doctors was undoubtedly owing to a secret apprehension that the progress of Christianity would destroy the credit of Juda-

ism, and bring on the ruin of their pompous ceremonies."—When we consider the change which time makes in every thing; when we reflect upon what Christianity then was, and what Deism is now, shall we wonder if the Deists, at the present day, apply these passages, in their schools, to their own unfortunate case. They, like the early Christians, are moral and sincere; but their morality and sincerity is no protection. Who shall decide in matters of opinion? Not the law: it will justify the Jews against the Christians, and they will have cause to complain. A little further Mosheim says, "The Christians persecuted by the priests, and the people set on to persecute them in the most vehement manner."—The Deists may, for aught I know, rank some of our priests with the savages of those days; but I should be sorry to go so far myself.

In the same chapter he tells us, that Nero was the first Roman Emperor who enacted laws against the Christians, and says, "The principal reason why the Romans persecuted the Christians, seems to have been the abhorrence and contempt with which the latter regarded the religion of the empire, which was so intimately connected with the form, and, indeed, with the essence of its political constitution."—The Jews and the Romans, like us, had costly temples, altars, sculptures, paintings, solemn forms, grand ceremonies, sublime mysteries, innumerable priests with fine garments, expensive offerings, tythes, and rates; but the early Christians, like our simple Deists, did not know the inestimable value and important advantages of these things, which the Romans seemed duly to appreciate, as appears by the following:—"Another circumstance which irritated the Romans against the Christians, was the simplicity of their worship, which resembled in nothing the sacred rites of any other people. The Christians had neither sacrifices nor temples, nor images, nor oracles, nor sacerdotal orders; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the reproaches of an ignorant multitude, who imagined that there could be no religion without them: thus they were looked upon as a set of Atheists."—"But this was not all; (continues Mosheim) the sordid interests of a multitude of selfish and lazy priests, were immediately con-

\* Vol. I. cent 1. part 1. chap. v.

"nected with the ruin of the Christian "cause."—He then goes on to tell us, that "to accomplish the more speedy ruin "of the Christians, those whose interests "were incompatible with the progress of "the Gospel loaded them with most opprobrious calumnies; and these (adds he) "were the only arms they had to oppose "the TRUTH."

How sorry I am, in reading the history of my own church, to find in its infancy such a strong parallel between the behaviour of the Romans towards the Christians, and the conduct of by far too many professors of our holy religion, in the present day, towards those unfortunate people whom we stigmatize with the name of DEISTS or THEISTS, because they acknowledge but one God, in opposition to us who are Tritheists. How many books have we in this country wherein these unhappy persons are branded with every odious epithet that the imagination can devise, and charged with conspiring against the eternal peace and happiness of their fellow creatures, when we know their works breathe nothing but the most unbounded philanthropy and benevolence. The general tenor of their writings approaches much nearer to the mildness and charity of our blessed Saviour than the sermons of many of the most eminent divines.—Have not philosophers, whose labours have been devoted to the improvement of mankind, whose dispositions have been most amiable, and whose lives most exemplary, been held up to the execration of the public as impious wretches, unworthy of existence? I grieve for the injury the cause of Christ has sustained by those who profess to be his ministers or disciples, descending to such unworthy measures, and promise, if God is pleased to spare me, and bless me with health and resolution, to vindicate genuine Christianity from the disgrace it has incurred from weak and wicked pretenders; but, at the same time, for the honour of my faith, to prove to the world, that an humble follower of Jesus is capable of writing "*An impartial, biographical, and critical account of all those persons denominated infidels, who have flourished since the birth of our Lord;*" a work for which I have been collecting materials during the last twenty years; and I have little doubt I shall be able to shew, that if the numbers of those calling themselves *Christians* could be analysed and compared with those

designated *Unbelievers*, the latter, in proportion to numerical strength, would be found to have produced the most GOOD MEN.—With fervent prayers for the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty, I am, Dear Sir, your sincere Friend,  
London, Jan. 1815. ERASMUS PERKINS.

#### ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS.

MR. COBBETT,—One of your Correspondents, who signs himself VARRO, has thought proper to introduce a defence of Sir William Drummond into your REGISTER, of the 14th inst. He has cast some free expressions on the Rev. G. D'Oyly, Christian Advocate in the University of Cambridge, who has publicly animadverted on the ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS, and has inserted in your REGISTER a rather full extract of violent, and, as I think, most unjust abuse of him, which has been poured forth by some anonymous writer. As I conceive the statement which VARRO has conveyed to you to be extremely unfair, I venture to trouble you with what I conceive to be a far more just and true representation of the matter. I trust to your candour to take the earliest opportunity of making this letter public, in compliance with your avowed wish, on every occasion, of letting both sides of the question be fairly heard. It is pretty well known that, two or three years ago, Sir William Drummond printed, and privately circulated, his book, entitled ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS, in which he endeavoured to prove the Bible to contain nothing but fable, allegory, and romance; and treated it with as profane and blasphemous ribaldry, as had ever been done by the most inveterate of infidels. Although this book was not publicly sold, yet it was clear that the author's forbearance did not proceed from tenderness to the Bible, but from his prudent regard to his own safety, and his desire of sheltering himself from animadversion; for he, and others acting for him, distributed the work at first without scruple, whenever they deemed the quarter a safe one, and even took singular pains, in some instances, to extend its circulation. Thus the book passed into a number of hands, became of public notoriety, and was, in some instances, the more eagerly sought for, from the secret manner of its distribution. Under these circumstances, what was to be done?



Was Sir W. Drummond to be allowed to taint the public mind with such matter, without a syllable of answer or animadversion? Was the Bible not to be heard even in its defence? Was this novel method of discovering truth to be adopted, that one side of the question only should be heard, and a complete bar put upon the mouths of all opponents, because the book which required an answer was *unpublished*? Was it to become an allowed and established privilege of wealth, to circulate opinions of every description, no matter how noxious to society, in full security from animadversion or contradiction, by the simple expedient of writing a book and distributing it gratuitously? I guess, no man in his senses will maintain so wild a position as this. In the case then of Sir W. Drummond, what was to be done? It is true, that he might have been prosecuted in a court of law for blasphemy; for, there is no doubt, that, in the contemplation of the law, a book gratuitously circulated, is no less a *publication* than one which is sold at the booksellers shops; and, if this course had been taken, it is tolerably certain that this Sicilian Knight, and British Privy Councillor, would have been raised to more public notoriety than he had yet attained, by the pillory. But as you, Mr. Cobbett, I observe, contend very strenuously against any use of legal prosecutions towards persons who write against the Bible, you must be the last person to maintain that such a proceeding ought to have been adopted towards Sir W. Drummond. Thus, then, unless the free license was to be granted to him, of saying what he pleased against the Bible, unnoticed and unchastised, it was absolutely necessary that some literary opponent should enter the lists against him, and examine a little the truth of his assertions, and the soundness of his pretensions. Accordingly, the clergyman, whose name your correspondent mentions, came forward for that purpose, and addressed, in the first place, some letters of remonstrance to the author, on the nature of his attack on revelation, and followed these up by an enquiry into the truth, accuracy, and learning which he displayed. I perceive your correspondent to affirm, that the *ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS* of Sir W. Drummond "displays a fund of prodigious 'erudition!!'" On the contrary, Mr. D'Oyly not only shewed, in every point, that his attempts to impeach the truth of the biblical histories were most futile and

unfounded; but he also shewed, what seems to have touched the author quite as nearly, that, under an ostentatious display of deep erudition, he is one of the most shallow of men; that he has used terms without any knowledge of their meaning, has heaped blunder upon blunder, committed inaccuracy after inaccuracy, and asserted the boldest falsehoods without the slightest excuse; and that, during all this time, he has stolen a great part of his matter from preceding infidel writers, while he endeavoured to assume to himself the credit of all the learning which he produced. Thus Mr. D'Oyly not only defeated the opposer of revelation, in his purpose, but stripped the vain jack-daw of his stolen plumes; and shewed that the imposing appearances of deep erudition, which the *ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS* conveyed, were of the most hollow and fallacious description. I wish neither you nor any one else to take all this on my assertion, but call upon every one to enquire for himself, by reading the *ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS*, and the remarks which have been made upon it. Your correspondent tells you, that three anonymous writers have started up in defence of the *ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS*, and have shewn the *ignorance* and *malice* of the person, who wrote against it. These three anonymous writers, it is pretty well known, are no other than Sir W. D. himself in disguise. They have written, it is true, a very bulky volume in professed defence of the *ŒDIPUS JUDAICUS*, but have almost entirely substituted railing and scurrilous invective for sound arguments; and instead of defending Sir W. D.'s blunders, have indicted whole reams of personal abuse against his opponent.—An anonymous pamphlet, signed J. R. has since appeared, in which it has been most fully shewn, that, notwithstanding all which is boldly affirmed by these virulent writers (of whose mode of argument, by the way, your correspondent gives no very unfair specimen), Mr. D'Oyly's charges and proofs against Sir Wm. Drummond remain good in every essential part. I must repeat, that I wish not any single person to believe what I here affirm, solely on my assertion; but as you have thought it right to publish an *ex-parte* statement from one correspondent, it seems but fair that you should give equal publicity to the opinion of another respecting this matter.

Your's, &c. JUSTUS,

Dec. 30, 1814.

## LETTRES DE CACHET.

SIR,—Your recent remarks on the unhandsome and illiberal newspaper abuse of the people of France, and the measures of their Government, are fully corroborated by the manner in which the *Morning Chronicle*, of last week, adverted to the proceedings against General Excelmans, who had been ordered under arrest by the King of France. Of this officer the *Chronicle* observed, that he had “petitioned both Chambers for redress, and has stated his willingness to surrender himself the moment a trial is promised him, and his reasons for withdrawing himself momentarily from the oppression which this renewed system of *Lettres de Cachet* had inflicted on him.”—Either the writer of this article is entirely ignorant of the nature of *Lettres de Cachet*, or he must have been influenced by motives of the worst kind, to compare the order given in this case to that terrible instrument.—In the justly celebrated answer to the Bourbon proclamation, published in your REGISTER of the 15th January, I observe some very pertinent remarks on the subject of *Lettres de Cachet*, extracted from Mr. Arthur Young’s Survey of France. To these may be added the following more detailed account by Gordon, an able writer in the cause of freedom, whose works were published about the beginning of last century:—“The French Government, though a mild one for an arbitrary one, is yet a very terrible one to an Englishman. All the advantages in it are not comparable to one single advantage in ours: I mean the Act of *Habeas Corpus*, which secures, at least rescues, from all wanton and oppressive imprisonment. In France, by the word of a Minister, the greatest, the most innocent, subject, may, from caprice, or a whisper, or the pique of a mistress, be committed to a dungeon for his life, or the best part of it, or as long as the Minister, or his mistress or minion pleases. Some have been there shut up in dismal durance and solitude for years together, though no harm was meant them; not for any offence real or imaginary, but only through mistake and likeness of names. Thus a Minister has sometimes committed his favorites, and useful agents, who lay in misery for years, and might have perished in it, had not accident contributed to undeceive him.—Such orders, called *Letters of the*

*Signet*, lie in the hands of the Ministers, as well as in those of the Under Governors of Provinces, to be used at their discretion, frequently to gratify their own vengeance. Is an Intendant piqued against any man of quality; or a Minister against a President of Parliament? Such a letter is straight sent to him, and he instantly sent from home, sometimes into a remote province. Is the Governor’s Lady, or daughter, disgusted at another lady in the place, finer and more admired than herself, her punishment is decreed, and the poor rival sent a wandering; a crime is easily forged, and the sufferer has no remedy. The smallest affront to a Monk in favour (and Monks, God knows, are soon offended), finds the same compassion; a victim must be offered to his holy rage.”

No one who reads this description of *Lettres de Cachet*, will be able to discover any resemblance to these in the proceedings against General Excelmans. He was not put under arrest to gratify the caprice of any Minister, Deputy Governor, Mistress, or Monk. He was, in the first instance, ordered to remove from Paris, by command of the King, for an offence, real or supposed, against the State. Had there been any intention to revive the *Lettres de Cachet*, the General would have been seized and sent to prison, without any ceremony, instead of giving him an opportunity to remove himself. But did he obey the order of his Sovereign? On the contrary, he remonstrated against it, and persisted in continuing at Paris. Even then, no violence was used, though, if he had been previously innocent, his disobedience might have been converted into a crime, and he dealt with accordingly.—The order to leave Paris was dated the 10th. On the 14th he had not gone to his place of destination, which led the Minister to put a guard on his house. In this stage of the business, and in place of sending him to prison, or even securing his person, the order was renewed, and twenty-four hours allowed him to remove himself. Still he continued refractory. It was, therefore, considered expedient to place him under arrest; but no attempt having been made to convey him from his house, an opportunity was thus afforded the General to make his escape.

Such being the well authenticated nature of the *Lettres de Cachet*, and such the true



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state of General Excelman's case, as given even in the *Morning Chronicle* itself, how is it possible to acquit the writer in that *Journal* of a base and malicious calumny against the French Government, when he denominates its proceedings "oppression," and a "renewed system of *Lettres de Cachet*?"—It is not my wish to advocate the conduct of the present Rulers of France, or to attach blame to the individual who has incurred their displeasure. The charge preferred by the former may be unfounded. The latter, of course, must be innocent.—But it is not necessary that either of these points should be established, to shew that the proceedings against the General merited the harsh terms by which they have been described by the *Chronicle*. In this land of liberty, where the *Habeas Corpus*, as Gordon says, "secures; at least rescues, "from all wanton and oppressive impris-sonment," numbers of persons are necessarily arrested, and even imprisoned, who it afterwards turns out are entirely innocent. We have each known individuals, for reasons of State, kept in close custody, without any suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*. Would we not call that man a knave, or a fool, who would charge our Government with oppression for sanctioning those proceedings? What, then, are we to think of the Editor of such a paper as the *Morning Chronicle*, when we see him bringing a similar charge against the French Government, who appear to have acted a part not more reprehensible than ours? Is it possible, as I asked before, to acquit such a man of wanton and deliberate malice?—  
Your's, &c. JUSTITIA.

January 4, 1815.

#### THE PILLORY.

MR. COBBETT,——I should like to be informed why our neighbours the Scotch, who have been so long celebrated for their liberality of sentiment, and so far famed for their hospitality, should have degenerated so much of late years, as to permit the following disgraceful affair, (the account of which has appeared in all our newspapers) to be transacted amongst them:—

"BRUTAL BEHAVIOUR.—Wednesday, between one and two o'clock, *William Coil* and *Elizabeth Roberts*, his wife, stood in the pillory at the cross of Glasgow, for Wilful Perjury, of which they were lately convicted at the She-

riff Court. During the whole exposure, they were assailed not only with filth but with stones. The man, who seemed at first to treat his punishment as a joke, was particularly aimed at, and must have received much bodily hurt. The woman, however, did not wholly escape. From the blood on her cap, she seemed to have been wounded on the head. The stones were thrown chiefly, if not entirely, by a party of lads stationed near the new building erecting on the site of the old gaol. When the hour was elapsed, the disgraceful business did not terminate. There were those among the mob who thought the sport far too fine to be given up so soon. The man was, according to their jargon, 'put through the mill.' He was cuffed and kicked, and knocked down and raised up, at the pleasure of the by-standers. In the Candleriggs-street, to which the mob moved, he was thrown into a cart, whose driver for some time drove him along, humouring the amusement; but, finding that neither himself nor his horse escaped the punishment meant for the old man, he loosed his cart, and tumbled him out on the street. In the course of the fray he was repeatedly raised shoulder-high, and exhibited in his grey-hairs, torn garments, and swollen features, a most pitiable spectacle. At length he was rescued by the exertions of the Police, and taken to the office in Albion-street."

That scenes, no less savage and barbarous than those described above, have been exhibited in London, within these few years, no one will pretend to deny; but that they should exist in Scotland, the seat of learning, where "pure and undefiled religion" has more professors than any where else, and where we ought to look for a more distinguished display of its humane and benevolent effects; that such a spectacle should be witnessed, at this time of day, in such a country, is a phenomenon well deserving the attention of those who feel interested in the cultivation of public morals, and in the improvement of our criminal code. I question much, whether in all Europe, even in "demoralized" France itself, an instance can be produced where popular fury has been permitted to discharge itself with such marks of ferocity, as in the case of the hoary-headed wretch who was given up by the Magistrates of Glasgow to be cuffed, kicked, and knocked

down, all for the "amusement" of the pious and hospitable inhabitants of that highly cultivated and enlightened city !!!

The pillory is evidently a vestige of that feudal barbarism which formerly overspread Europe; and although it is not now attended, as then, with the painful infliction of having the ears nailed to the instrument of disgrace, or the cheek branded with a hot iron, it is a punishment that must, in many cases, be worse than death, when the culprit, through a mistaken policy, is left to the mercy of an infuriated mob.—It would be difficult, I think, to point out the wisdom of that law, which leaves the degree of punishment of a criminal to be determined, and inflicted, by the multitude, who neither know, or are capable of justly appreciating, the offence with which he is charged. The case of the man at Glasgow was no doubt of a very aggravated nature. But are all persons condemned to the pillory of the same description? Have we not had that sentence put in execution for mere matters of opinion? and can it seriously be said that any person thus situated ought to be consigned to the hands of a set of unprincipled ruffians, to be kicked and cuffed, as long as they please, for their amusement? Why should not the law explicitly define and apportion the degree of punishment belonging to each offence? Why should so glaring a proof of its inefficacy be permitted for one moment to exist? Where our national character is so much involved, and the rights of humanity so deeply implicated, it surely would be no disgrace if our legislators would exert themselves to get a practice abolished, which, on all occasions, would be "more honoured in the breach than in the

observance." Much as has been done of late towards ameliorating our criminal law, there still remains a vast accumulation of abuse and error, which it will require more than ordinary exertion and talent to overcome. Those to whom the country is already indebted for many excellent reforms in our criminal code, will have much to combat, in the way of prejudice, before they can accomplish all they propose. But as they have already experienced the beneficial advantages of *perseverance*, they may pretty safely calculate, that as long as they continue to keep the object steadily in view, they need be under no apprehensions as to the result.—Yours, &c.

BENEVOLUS.

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#### UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

SIR,—You will much oblige the writer of the letter which appeared in your last REGISTER on the subject of the Oxford prison, by inserting the following *Postscript* to it:—

It is true that a room is now fitting up in the prison for sick persons, but this room will not contain more than four beds, which is a very inadequate accommodation. As the University Officers are at this time endeavouring to apprehend all the prostitutes who are ill of a certain disease, the prison, should the winter be severe, will present a scene of more than usual misery. The writer will feel himself much obliged to any resident Member of the University of Cambridge, who will favour him, through the medium of your REGISTER, with a full and accurate account of the method pursued there with respect to these unfortunate women.

Oxford, Jan. 2, 1815.